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TAGS: OPRC KPAQ KMDR PREL AR HA IR CO CH
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DALAI LAMA, IRAN, HAITI, AND U.S. LATIN
AMERICAN POLICY; 2/18/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Although Europe's financial troubles continue to dominate international news sections, several U.S. topics also made headlines. Articles characterized China's disapproval of the Dalai Lama's visit to the U.S. as a sign that China "wants to be heard" on key international issues. In addition, a pro-government newspaper ran reports about eight of the 10 Americans being released from Haiti, as well as a story about the U.S. not giving Colombian torture victims justice. Two opinion articles criticized U.S. foreign policy, calling it a "double-standard" in regards to Iran's nuclear program, and nearly non-existent in Latin America.
End summary.

DALAI LAMA IN WASHINGTON

¶2. China's growing influence on U.S. policy was the focus of largest-circulation daily Clarin's coverage of the Dalai Lama's visit. Washington correspondent Ana Baron points out that while it is a "ritual" for China to complain every time the Dalai Lama visits the U.S., China now "wants to be heard" and that China's growth in power is "proportional to the decline of the power of the U.S." However, Baron writes that the U.S. "needs China more than vice versa" when it comes to issues such as Iran, North Korea, and financing "the enormous fiscal deficit" the U.S. "suffers" from.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/18/elmun.do/i-02142446.htm>

¶3. Centrist Critica's Washington correspondent, Silvia Ayuso, reported on President Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama on 2/18. Although meeting the Dalai Lama is a "White House tradition," Ayuso highlights "explicit warnings" from China that the meeting threatens U.S-China relations regarding Iran and the world economy, both "key" issues for the U.S. The article also quoted a Washington Post opinion article by Carl Gershman ("National Foundation for Democracy") supporting the meeting, as the Dalai Lama is someone who "shares the most profound values" with the U.S., such as democracy and human rights.

<http://criticadigital.com/impresa/index.php?s=ecc=nota&nid=38712>

U.S. vs. IRAN

¶4. Juan Gelman, columnist for left-leaning Pagina 12, opines that the U.S. is being too harsh on Iran and that it holds a "double standard" between Iran's nuclear program and that of its allies. Gelman questions why the U.S. is putting so much pressure on Iran when "none of the 16 U.S. spy services" estimate Iran has the capability to build a nuclear bomb right now. This is especially true since Germany is the country with the most "nuclear armory" and "thanks to the work of the Pentagon," there are several European countries with "undeclared nuclear arsenals." However, neither of these facts "will stop Berlin from supporting sanctions against Tehran."

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/contratapa/index-2010-02-18.html>

AMERICANS RELEASED FROM HAITIAN JAIL

¶5. The eight Americans released from jail in Haiti received a small mention in Pagina 12. The article notes that Haitian

officials still are interrogating two Americans who were in Haiti prior to the earthquake on January 12. Pagina 12 gives a summary of the case so far, noting that it began when the Americans tried bringing 33 orphans into the Dominican Republic, but "suspiciously, they could not demonstrate" that the children were indeed orphans.

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-140517-2010-02-18.html>

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA

¶6. Conservative Buenos Aires Economico covered a speech critical of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America given by Georgetown University Professor Michael Shifter at the University of Palermo, Buenos Aires. Although he is a "supporter of the President," Shifter observed that Latin America fell to "sixth or seventh place" on the President's agenda, and that "neither Obama nor Secretary Clinton has visited South America." As for Argentina, Shifter notes that Argentina's positions against terrorism and Iran's nuclear program "help avoid deterioration in relations," but that there is also "much uncertainty."

¶7. An investigative article about Colombian paramilitants being extradited to the U.S. appeared in Pagina 12. The article, based on a human rights report from the University of California Berkeley, says that since the paramilitants were extradited in May 2008, "without advising anyone," there has been no information given to the victims about their cases. This is despite the promises of U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield, who had promised victims, lawyers, and Colombian judges information in order to "advance justice against human rights violations."

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1-40496-2010-02-18.html>

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<http://www.state.sqov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

MARTINEZ